

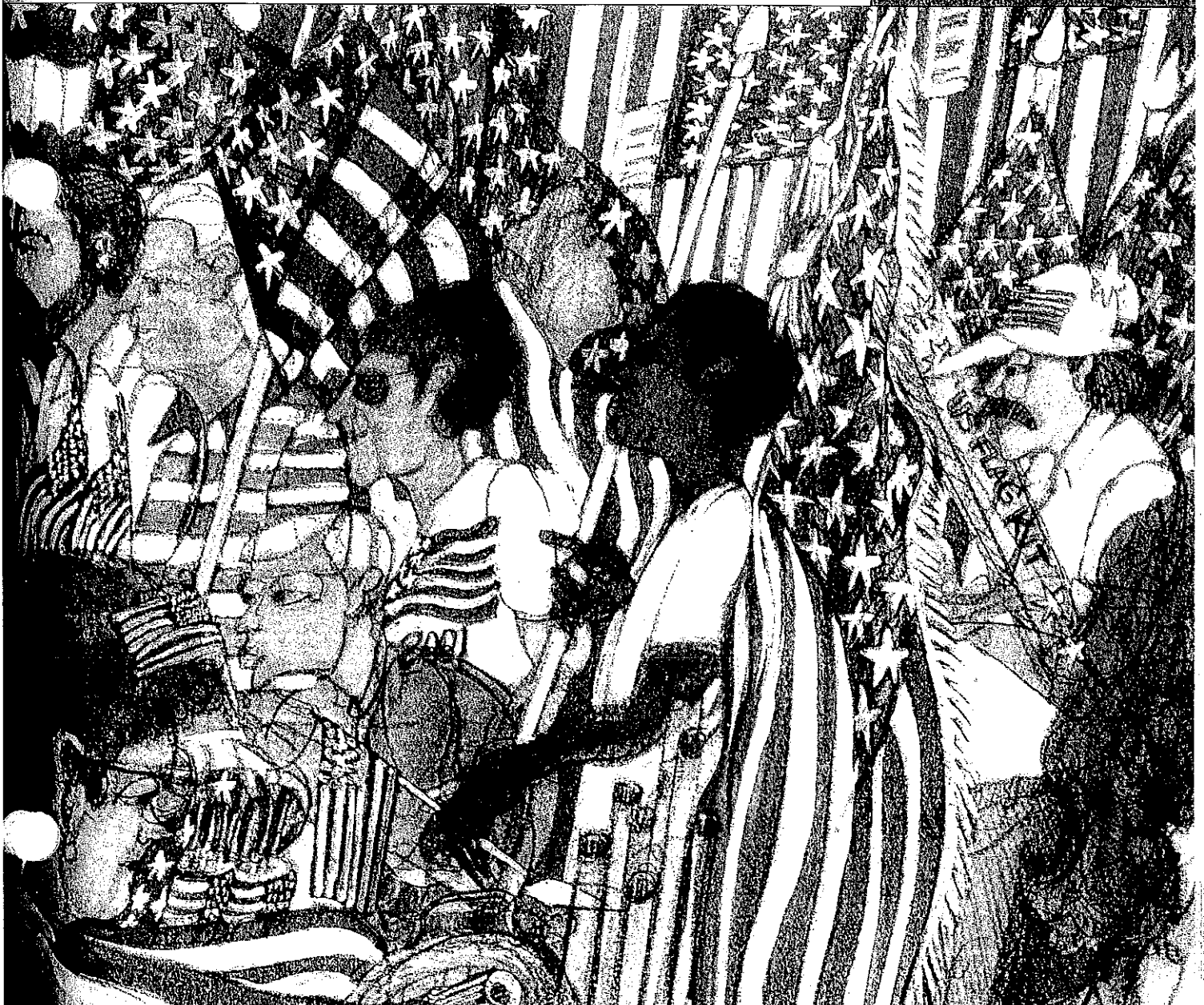
How did political parties develop?

LESSON PURPOSE

The new nation faced a number of problems. Differing ideas about how these problems should be resolved led to the rise of political parties. In this lesson you will learn what political parties are and how they began in American politics.

When you finish the lesson, you should be able to describe the two original political parties, their leaders, and the issues that divided them.

20



TERMS TO UNDERSTAND



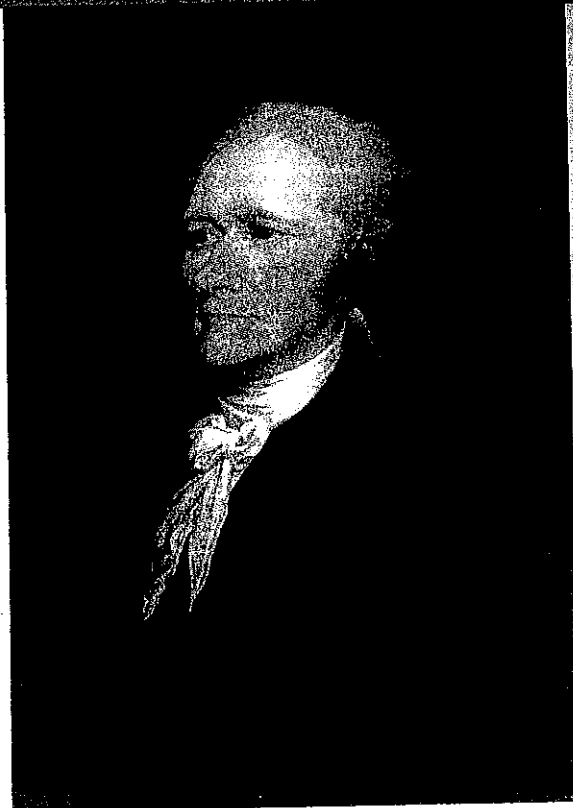
Alien and Sedition Acts
currency
Federalist Party
political parties
Republican Party

Why were the Framers of the Constitution against political parties?

When George Washington was elected as the first president, he received every electoral vote. One reason for this was the great respect people had for him. Another reason was that there were no political parties to run candidates against him.

The Framers were opposed to the idea of political parties. Political parties are groups of people who join together because they have similar views about government. The Constitution does not include rules for forming or regulating political parties.

The Framers believed that political parties were factions. As you learned in Lessons 3 and 10, a faction is usually a dissatisfied group formed within a larger group. The Framers thought that factions might fight to promote the interests of their own members. The Framers feared that the strongest faction would then control government. In such a case, government would not protect equally the rights and interests of all the people. Instead, government would promote the interests of the party in power.



What role for the federal government did Alexander Hamilton favor?

When Washington took office, the new nation faced many problems. The country was in debt and needed to create good relations with other nations. People had different ideas about how to solve these problems. As President Washington and his advisers tried to deal with the issues, disagreements arose. These disagreements eventually led to the rise of political parties.



Do you recognize these animals as symbols for contemporary political parties? Why do you suppose they adopted these symbols?

Why was the disagreement about the meaning of the words in the Constitution important?

President Washington chose Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson to be his advisers. Hamilton was the Secretary of the Treasury. Jefferson was the Secretary of State. The views of Hamilton and Jefferson about the powers of the federal government were often in conflict.

Hamilton wanted a strong federal government. He favored taking a broad view of the meaning of the words in the Constitution. The Constitution does not always use clear terms to describe the power of the federal government. Take, for example, the necessary and proper clause. What does necessary mean? Hamilton believed that necessary meant that which is needful or useful to solve a problem. He argued that the Constitution created government to solve national problems. As long as a problem was

national, the federal government could and should deal with it.

On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson believed in small, local government. He favored taking a narrow view of the meaning of the words in the Constitution. To Jefferson, necessary meant "absolutely necessary." The federal government could not do whatever it wanted. Government could not exercise power just because it was convenient to do so. If government were free to define its own powers, it would threaten the liberty of the people.

The conflict about the meaning of the words in the Constitution was an important one. Hamilton would give more power to the federal government. Jefferson would limit it strictly to its enumerated powers.

The people who supported the views of Hamilton eventually became the **Federalist Party**. The people who supported Jefferson became the **Republican Party**. This is not the same Republican Party of today.

How well do you understand Jefferson's concern?

Suppose the members of your student government had the power to make whatever rules for your school they thought were "necessary and proper" for your "general welfare." What rules do you think they should make? Discuss your choices with a partner. Use the questions that follow for guidelines.

- ① Who would be in a position to decide what was necessary and proper?
- ② Who would decide what the general welfare was?
- ③ What limitations would there be on the student government's powers?



Who should decide what rules are necessary and proper for the general welfare of your class?

Why was the disagreement about the nation's economy important?

As Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton wanted to strengthen the nation's economy. To do this, he wanted to create a strong currency. Currency is the form of money that a country uses.

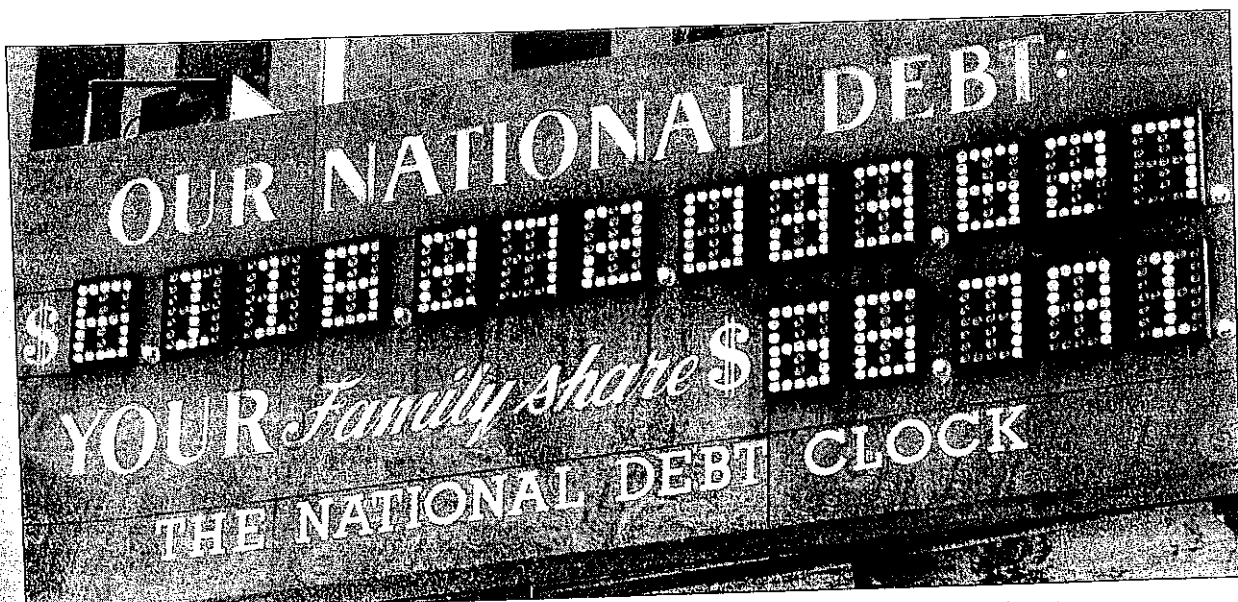
He also wanted to encourage people to manufacture goods on a large scale. At that time, most Americans were farmers. The factories that did exist were small, family-owned businesses.

Hamilton also wanted to solve the problem of the national and state debts. Most of the debt was the result of borrowing to pay for the Revolutionary War. The federal government owed \$54 million and the state governments owed about \$25 million. Hamilton believed that solving the problem of the debt would strengthen the economy and would establish the public credit of the United States.

To achieve his goals, Hamilton came up with a plan to create a government bank. The bank, Hamilton said, was needed to help collect taxes, make loans to private citizens, and issue paper money. Gold and silver coins were in short supply. Paper money would increase the amount of currency available.

The problem was that the people did not trust paper money. They believed that it would not hold its value. The value of coins was based on the amount of gold or silver in the coin. Thus, the federal government would need to guarantee the value of paper money.

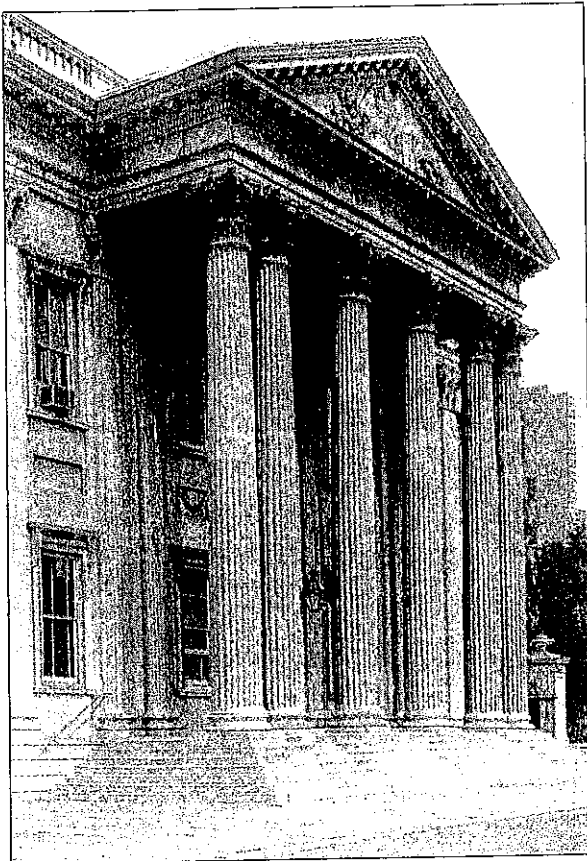
Hamilton advised President Washington that the necessary and proper clause gave government the power to create a bank. He argued that a bank was necessary to allow government to carry out its enumerated powers to collect taxes and regulate trade.



Why was Hamilton worried about national and state debt? Do you think the national and state debt is still something that government officials should worry about? Why or why not?

Thomas Jefferson was against the use of federal power to create a bank. He believed that the necessary and proper clause only allowed government to do those things that were absolutely necessary. Creating a bank did not pass the test.

George Washington listened to the arguments for and against the bank. He then signed the bill from Congress creating the Bank of the United States. The effect of the new law was to increase the power of the federal government. People began to take sides on whether the federal government had acted in accord with the Constitution.



This building in Philadelphia was the site of the First Bank of the United States from 1795 to 1811. What were Jefferson's and Hamilton's opinions on establishing the bank?

Why was the disagreement about foreign affairs important?

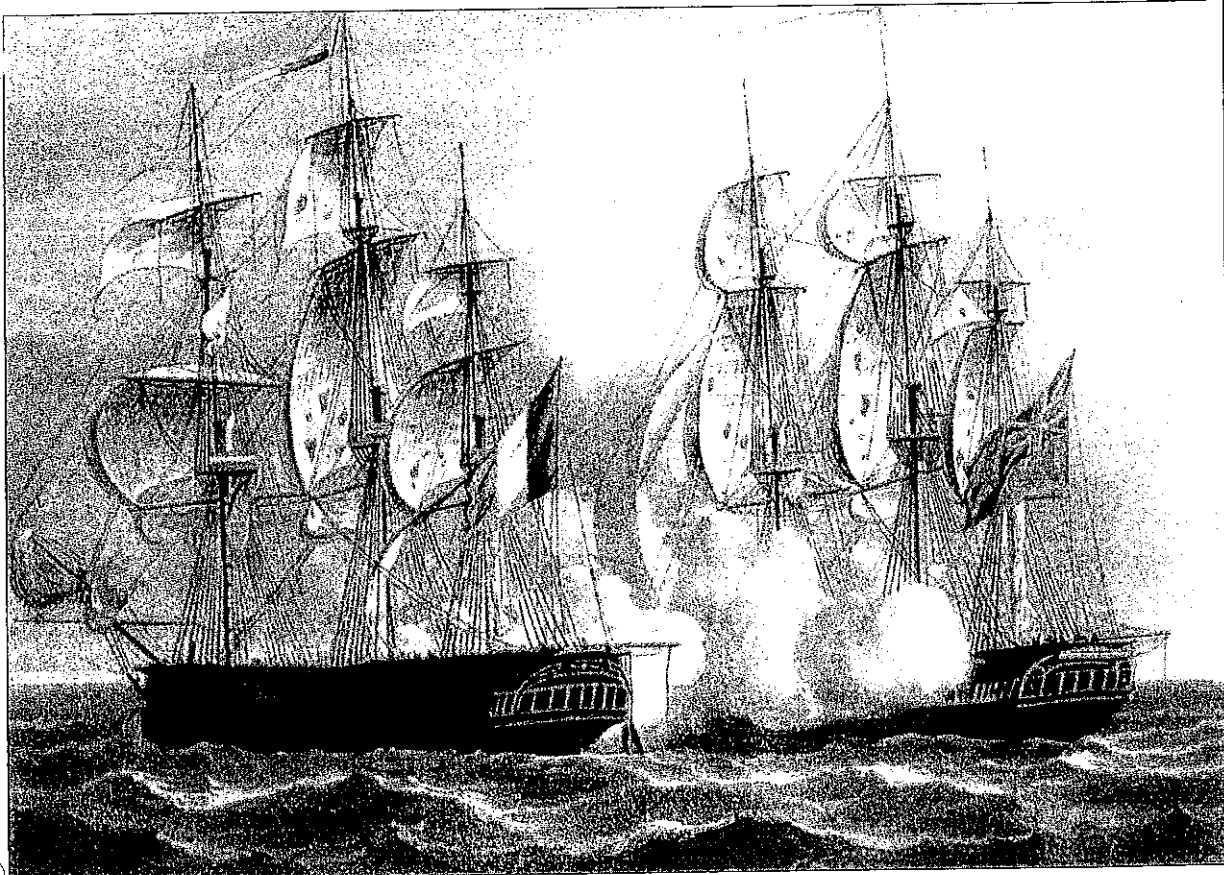
In 1793 war broke out between France and Great Britain. This event raised the level of tension between the Federalists and the Republicans.

Thomas Jefferson wanted a close relationship with France. Many Americans had strong feelings for France. After all, the French had supported the colonies during the Revolutionary War.

During this time the British were seizing American ships on the high seas.



John Jay was quoted as saying that he could travel from Boston to Philadelphia by the light of his burning effigies. Why was his treaty with the British unpopular?



Why did the war between France and Great Britain raise the level of tension between the Federalists and the Republicans?

They were searching for weapons going to France. The British also refused to leave the forts they still occupied on land that now belonged to the United States. The Republicans wanted the United States to take strong measures against the British.

Alexander Hamilton wanted a close relationship with Great Britain. Most of the colonists had come from Britain and still had links with people in that nation. In addition, the United States carried on more trade with Great Britain than it did with France. The Federalists wanted the United States to side with the British.

President Washington had sent United States Chief Justice John Jay on a mission to Great Britain. He negotiated

a treaty that confirmed that the British would leave the forts they still held in the United States. They agreed to increase trade with the Americans. They did not agree to stop searching American ships for goods going to the enemy, France. The treaty was unpopular and the Republicans were greatly angered.

Washington did not want to take sides in the war between Great Britain and France. To do so, he thought, would be harmful to the United States. He declared that the American government would be neutral. When Washington left the presidency, he cautioned the new nation against entering into any permanent agreements with foreign governments.

LESSON REVIEW

- ① Why were the Framers of the Constitution against having political parties?
- ② What was the disagreement over the meaning of the words in the Constitution?
- ③ What was the disagreement about the creation of the Bank of the United States?
- ④ What was the disagreement about foreign affairs?
- ⑤ What were the Alien and Sedition Acts? Why were they passed?
- ⑥ Explain how the disagreements about how to solve the new nation's problems led to the rise of political parties.
- ⑦ Why was the election of 1800 important?

ACTIVITIES

- ① Draw a cartoon that illustrates the disagreements between the Federalist and Republican parties.
- ② Presidents and vice presidents were elected differently in 1800 than they are today. Make a chart showing what the differences are. Find out which Amendment to the Constitution was passed to correct the problems that occurred in the 1800 presidential election.
- ③ Use the Internet to do a research activity. Find current information about the Democratic and Republican parties. Learn what each party believes about how government should be run. Then study a policy issue that interests both parties. Create a chart that illustrates their difference of opinion over the issue.
- ④ Find information about the beliefs of third parties, such as the Libertarian Party, the Reform Party, or the Green Party. Write a campaign speech that explains the role of third parties in elections today. Give the speech to your classmates.